Letter from Taizé

Bimonthly 3.50 FF 5 October – November 1997

Taizé
YOUNG ADULT EUROPEAN MEETING
Vienna
29 December - 2 January '97/98

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THE SUMMER MEETINGS IN TAIZÉ

Sufferings and Hopes

During the summer, the tents in Taizé were widened to encompass the five continents. This year, although the church was extended even more, an additional circus tent had to be set up with a sound system so that everyone could take part in the prayers.

The second half of August was marked by a coming and going between Taizé and Paris for the World outh Day celebrations. Many of those ho came to Europe for these meetings opped by Taizé, and the young people om other continents who had been in- ted to Taizé went to Paris. Twenty-five others took part in World Youth Day, pecially to hold prayers and welcome eople for four days in Saint Sulpice hurch.

During the entire summer in Taizé, the ost striking presence was that of young eople coming from countries where vi- ent conflicts are taking place. Five ambodians arrived at a time when ghting was beginning again in their ountry. Eight Sudanese came who had rown up in refugee camps, displaced om the South where a war has been tak- ng place for forty years now. Palesti- ians were finally able, after much red ape, to get the necessary documents and eave their territory. African students tudying in Algeria came to catch their reath before going back to join their omrades.

Along other "fault lines of humanity," eople from Haiti, Hong Kong, Albania, osnia-Herzegovina and Copts from gypt made present the challenges, suf- erings and hopes of the human family. he experience of these young people en- ourages many others to prepare them- elves to undertake responsibilities. In he face of these situations, words like econciliation and forgiveness acquire an even stronger meaning. The need for roots planted deeply in the wellsprings of trust becomes imperative for those who wish to remain faithful to their choice to live Christ for others.

Several Church leaders spent time in Taizé, either coming with young people from their land or finding them there. The community hosted bishops from different traditions--Catholic, Anglican, Lutheran, Orthodox, Coptic...

At the end of a stay in Taizé, there is often a meeting to share one's discoveries and wishes for the future. Many talk about the new and unexpected experience of unity they have had in Taizé--not the "virtual" unity of computer networks, nor that of a worldwide "youth culture," a uniform least common denominator, but the unity that brings together a being in all the depth of his vital longings. A unity that, during a week on the hill, can only be built up day by day, through prayer with others and by going more deeply into the wellsprings of the faith, in spite of the constraints of a simple life, translation problems, fatigue, and the necessary tasks to be done.

Another discovery made through common prayer, long times of silence and meditative singing is that an inner life is given, a communion with God is possible. Even when doubts and contradictions remain, without having an answer for everything, each person can already undertake an open and silent search with others. Relying on others allows us to express this search. There is no opposition between doubts and the choice to go forward in trust.

THE YOUNG ADULT EUROPEAN MEETING IN VIENNA

Sharing a Great Many Expectations

A few weeks before the twentieth European meeting of young adults, expectations are growing in Vienna. The preparation is rooted in the life of the parishes, and young people are setting out to prepare to welcome in the best way possible those who will come to spend a few days with them at the end of the year.

In every country of Europe, groups are getting organized and inviting others to join them for this new stage in the pilgrimage of trust on earth. How can we offer a sign today that trust can grow among individuals and among nations? Such a sign is a powerful image of hope.

Groups will come to Vienna from Siberia as well as Portugal, from Sweden as well as Sicily. For the first time in many years, because of agreements between countries, special trains will be organized, for example from Poland. Those who gather together in Vienna will be animated by different hopes and expec-

tations. The times of prayer together and the times of sharing and listening will enable them to go back to their daily lives filled with new energy.

THE JOY OF HOSPITALITY

During the summer months in Taizé, the young Austrians did not hide their joy at being able to welcome the pilgrims coming for the meeting. Here is what two of them had to say:

"The meeting will be important for many people here in Austria, where faith and the Church are sometimes misunderstood. As a result of welcoming tens of thousands of young people, our church will take on a different appearance. Since it will not be a closed meeting, but rather one that is open and accessible to all, many people will be interested and will take part. And even a short experience of prayer can change someone's life deeply."

"The previous meeting in Vienna five years ago came as a bit of a surprise to our parish. We prepared everything in just a few weeks' time. The people were so happy that, in the wake of the meeting, a regular prayer has continued for the past five years. This year I am more aware of the importance of hospitality for our city, to help people discover the joy of welcoming others and to defuse the fear of foreigners."

THE NATIONS HAVE A COMMON FUTURE

A young Austrian and a German shared their expectations at the end of the summer in Taizé and their conversation was recorded:

– What was new for me this year in Taizé was the recording of a new CD. While trying to sing well from a musical point of view, I understood how important it was that it remain a prayer. In that way, the songs come from within and are truly beautiful. What also touched me this year were the meetings with so many young people from so many different countries. I even met a young doctor from Tanzania who has the same specialization as I do! It will be the same in Vienna, an opportunity to search together with people from many different backgrounds. You come from the city that will welcome us: what do you think about this?

– For me the most important thing will be, when I welcome, to give a bit of what I have received. It will also be an opportunity to make a concrete link between my daily life and my experience in Taizé. What is so easy in Taizé, to be open to others and to take the time to pray, will become very present in the daily life of our city. I wonder all the time what Vienna, and Austria, can help young people from elsewhere to discover, what we have that is special compared to other cities or countries.

– As a German, I will be happy to discover Vienna not as a tourist, but through the eyes of those who live there. In the Austrians I know, I am surprised by their sense of reality and by their openness. Maybe that openness is what you have that is special.

– That's true. On the one hand, I think of all the Austrians who travel all over the world and take part in development projects or in the life of local churches. When they return home and tell of their experiences, they bring a breath of fresh air to us. I am also thinking of all the parishes of Vienna that opened their doors to Muslim refugees from Bosnia, welcoming them in parish halls and helping them become part of the life of neighbourhoods.

– Your history and your geographical situation at the heart of Europe bring you close to a great many peoples. In your city, all the nuances, all the details of humanity are present. Many people there know that the problems of personal life or of coexistence between peoples are not solved with a few easy words.

– That is precisely one of the hopes I have for the Vienna meeting: not just that it will help us to experience the beauty of prayer together, but that the Viennese will realize, thanks to the visible presence of young adults from many different places, that the nations of the earth, in their diversity, have a common future.

Taizé
A Meaning to Life

Olivier Clément

In this book, compiled from a series of informal reflections on his visits to Taizé, the author links his own personal search for meaning in life to the experience of the thousands of young people who participate in the meetings coordinated by the community at Taizé itself and all over the world. How can we move from a sense of nothingness and futility towards joy, towards trust, towards an inner life? What can link together a deep spiritual life and down-to-earth solidarity with our fellow human beings?

Olivier Clément is a member of the Russian Orthodox Church, working as professor at the Orthodox Theological Institute of Saint Sergius in Paris. He strives in particular for understanding and sharing between Christians of the Eastern and Western Churches.

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t the end of this year, tens of housands of young adults from ll the countries of Europe will be elcomed in Vienna, the capital of ustria. A new stage in the pilgrimage of trust on earth," will be the twentieth European neeting prepared by Taizé.

aking part in the European neeting means preparing oneself o foster reconciliation on all evels, in the human family as well s in the midst of those around s in our daily life.

he welcome in families and arishes helps us to discover, in a angible way, that peace and trust are possible among people who are ery different.

he common prayers, the times of roup reflection root the search or the meaning of life in a ommunion in God.

Meeting witnesses to a commitment on behalf of others, n parishes and neighbourhoods, helps us to take on responsibilities n our own situation.

paration:
the European meeting to go well, each par- ant must take part in all that is proposed. An ude of attention and openness to others, es- ially from other countries, is vital. The time of paration should provide a foretaste of the eting itself, so that those who register know at they are committing themselves to, so that y can consciously decide to take part in all prayers and meetings. The preparation takes ce on a regional basis through meetings and yers which will be organized from September

e following questions can help this prepara- n:
What motivates me to set out towards other Christians who are far away? Am I ready to ake a similar step towards those who are nearby?
Who can I set out with? Who do I know around me who would be happy to take part in his stage of the "pilgrimage of trust," in this experience of discovering the meaning of the Church and of being open to others? How can propose it to other people beyond my circle of friends and acquaintances?
Can I take a time of silence now and then to review my ife, to pray simply while listening to God, and to see what consequences the "pil- grimage of trust" has in my daily life?
The pilgrimage to Vienna calls for an inner attitude of openness, of attentiveness to others. How can I begin by opening myself to those who need me here and now?
The starting-point of the pilgrimage is the local community. How can I look for ways, from the very beginning of the preparation, of maintain- ng and deepening links with different groups and local Christian communities?

Taizé
YOUNG ADULT EUROPEAN MEETING
Vienna
29 December '97 -2 January '97/98

Vienna

To prepare, to register for the European meeting...

Practical Details

Date: Arrive Monday morning, 29th December 1997 between 7am and 12 noon. Depart Friday morning, 2nd January 1998.

General programme: Participants will be welcomed by families and local church communities throughout the city. Morning prayer each day will be in one of the local churches of the neighbourhood where you are staying. Then meetings in small groups with other participants and with local people. Each day — midday and evening — there will be two common prayers for all participants of the meeting together. In the afternoon, workshops on various themes.

Accommodation: Simple conditions — with families, in schools and in church halls. Bring sleeping-bag and lightweight mattress.

17 to 29 year olds:
— those who can help, as animators in parishes or as team-leaders for practical tasks, or in the choir group, need to arrive on Saturday 27th December, between 8am and 3pm. (Arrival not possible on 28th December.)
— those who arrive on 29th December choose one of three ways of taking part:
participation in the life of parishes of the city (this is the main group)
the silence group (seen individually)
while still participating in the life of a parish, helping in a team that has a practical responsibility (meal distribution, church team, choir group). It is still possible to join such a group on 29th December.

16 year olds may come to the meeting only if accompanied by an adult over 18, with each adult accompanying no more than four 16 year olds. Arrival: 29th December — not before. All take part in the main group during the meeting: "participation in the life of parishes of the city".

Adults over 30: the European Meeting is intended for young adults under 30, however a few adults over this age can also come, in particular if they are leading groups of young adults. We ask older adults (over 45) to consider sponsoring a young person to come from a church, chaplaincy or school in their area, instead of coming themselves. Adults over 30 all participate in the main group, and arrive on 29th December (not before). Those who cannot accept the same simple accommodation conditions as the young people and who need a "real bed" should indicate this on their registration form.

Families with children, and people with a disability who need special accommodation should contact Taizé — best by telephone in October or November — to arrange this.

The contribution to costs expected from young people under 30 from Britain will be in the region of £40 for the whole meeting, whether you arrive on the 27th or 29th; more for adults. As well as the hire of meeting-halls and equipment, this covers all meals and a public transport pass.

Send in your registration form by 1st December at the latest. Further information will be sent in November to those who register earlier. Send the form to Taizé either directly or through the person leading your group.

Travel:
— special coaches at £130 return will run from the UK. Contact "Skyliners", Flaval House, Caldwell Road, NUNEATON, CV11 4NB. Tel: (01203) 325682 / 328410; Freephone: (0500) 481111; Fax: (01203) 354626

— from other countries: write to Taizé for information. Tel.: (+33) 385 50 30 02 Fax: (+33) 385 50 30 16 e-mail: meetings@taize.fr Web site: http://www.taize.fr

REGISTRATION FORM

Send before 1st December to: "European Meeting", Taizé Community, 71250 TAIZÉ, France. Tel: (+33) 385.50.30.02 (10-12 am and 4.30-6.30 pm); Fax: (+33) 385.50.30.16.

First Name

Family Name

Address

County or City & State Post code

Telephone : .....

Occupation :..... Age: .....

✗ I'm coming alone / with a group from the town of.....
led by .....
(Circle "Yes" or "No" or complete where necessary)
✗ For adults (over 30 years) and those who cannot sleep on the floor: I need a bed: yes / no if "yes", say whether you are (please circle): woman man couple family with ..... children disabled person helper of disabled person
✗ I will arrive on 29th December: yes / no (arrival time between 7am and 12 noon)
✗ I will arrive on 27th December (17-30 year olds only): yes / no
✗ to help with (please circle): animation / work teams / music team.
N.B. If for any reason you are arranging your own accommodation, please send us the address where you will be staying.

Two Questions on the Kingdom of God

What does it mean "to enter the Kingdom of God"?

At the time of Jesus, the expression "to enter the Kingdom of God" was commonly used to express the entry into a communion with God that has no end. In the story of the rich young man, for example, "to get eternal life" (Matt 19,16), "to enter life" (Matt 19,17) and "to enter the Kingdom of God" (Matt 19,23.24) are synonymous. ("The Kingdom of heaven" means exactly the same thing as "the Kingdom of God"; it was simply one of the ways to refer to God without naming him directly.)

Already before Christ's coming, the expectation of God's Kingdom gave believers the certainty that human history was not absurd, without a goal. Jesus himself compares its arrival to entering a room where a festive meal is being celebrated (Matt 22,2; 25,10).

The study and practice of the commandments were to help believers enter the world of the resurrection when the time came. Jesus gives exactly the same reply as other religious leaders of his time when he says, "If you want to enter life, keep the commandments" (Matt 19,17).

But at other times, Jesus refuses to situate the Kingdom of God in time or space, for, he says, "the Kingdom of God is in your midst" (Luke 17,20-21). It is a dynamic reality: God comes and is already present while Jesus is speaking. As a result, it is not something you enter at the end of a long road.

If God is so close, then whoever turns to him can join him in the present moment. All that is needed is to trust in the words of the Gospel that assure us of God's presence. All kinds of people, "the good and the evil," come crowding up and do not hesitate to come, just as they are, and celebrate the festival of the Kingdom with Jesus. It was probably for them that he spoke these enigmatic words: "The good news of the Kingdom of God is being preached, and since that time people are forcing their way into it" (Luke 16,16).

The gates of God's Kingdom are always open. To enter, all Jesus asks is that we become like little children, in other words that we trust (cf. Matt 18,3). Entering the Kingdom of God is a kind of new birth, a transformation of our whole being by the forgiveness and love of God (cf. John 3,5).

Why did Jesus only speak of the Kingdom of God in parables?

At the beginning, the concept of the Kingdom of God was the expression of a concrete hope with political connotations. Six hundred years before Christ, the city of Jerusalem was destroyed, its inhabitants disoriented because there was no longer a king. A prophet arose and announced God's return. He had a vision of God returning to his city as a king: recognized by the guards at the outposts, they ran to announce the good news to the entire city: "Your God is king!" Resettled in his dwelling, having returned to his Temple, God will act as a king should, rebuilding the city and gathering together the people (Isa 52,7-10).

John the Baptist also spoke of God's coming in terms of a "reign" or "kingdom." (cf. Matt 3,2-3). With the entire nation, he was looking forward to the great change that would bring God as a king. Mary had already sung of this visit of God: "He has brought down the mighty from their thrones and raised up the lowly. He fills the hungry with good things... He has helped Israel, his servant" (Luke 1,52-54).

After John was arrested, Jesus announced the coming of the Kingdom (Mark 1,14-15). He emphasizes its closeness more than John did. Jesus probably spoke in the synagogue in Nazareth in the year 27, during one of the great jubilees that periodically awakened great hopes in Israel. When he referred to the beginning of his ministry as "a year of the Lord's favour" (Luke 4,19), many must have thought that the great turning-point of God's coming, as described in the oracle of Isaiah or in the song of Mary, was going to happen that very year, in the months to come.

But great visible changes did not happen right away. Time passed, several months, perhaps a year, and John himself asked the question: should we not give up the great hopes of the beginnings (Matt 11,2-3)? Enthusiasm waned and many left Jesus (cf. John 6,66). But at that time, the parables led the disciples of Jesus to progress from notions and expectations that were too clearly defined to the discovery of "the mysteries of the Kingdom" (Luke 8,10). Jesus "did not speak except in parables" (Mark 4,34) because God can never be reduced to what is measurable and observable. His presence and his unceasing activity must be deciphered in events—in particular in the life and the person of Jesus, but also in all things and in every person—by an effort similar to the one which is necessary to meditate upon and to understand a parable.

MEDITATING ON THE WORD
NOVEMBER

These short readings are those read, day by day, at community prayer in Taizé. The Bible reference given indicates a slightly longer passage.

Mt 5:1-12
1 Sat ALL SAINTS
Jesus' disciples came to him and he taught them saying: Happy are the poor in spirit, the kingdom of heaven is theirs.

Mk 12:28-34
2 SUN Jesus said: Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your strength. Love your neighbour as yourself. These are the two greatest commandments.

Hos 6:3-6
3 Mon Let us strive to know the Lord; that he will come is as certain as the dawn. He will come to us like the spring rain upon the earth.

1 Co 12:3-13
4 Tue There are different kinds of spiritual gifts, but it is the same Spirit; there are different ways of serving, but it is the same Lord; there are many forms of activity, but in everybody it is the same God who is at work in them all.

Mi 4:1-3
5 Wed Days will come when many peoples will come and say, "Let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, so that he may teach us his ways." And they will hammer their swords into ploughshares and their spears into bill-hooks.

Lk 14:27-33
6 Thu Jesus said: Whoever does not carry their cross and follow me cannot be my disciple.

1 Jn 4:16-19
7 Fri There is no fear in love, but perfect love drives out fear.

Ps 69:30-37
8 Sat You who seek God, may your hearts live! For God listens to the poor.

1 Co 3:9-17
9 SUN Do you not know that you are God's temple and that the Spirit of God lives in you?

1 Co 10:23-31
10 Mon Let no one seek their own interest, but rather the good of others. Whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.

Ex 14:5-31
11 Tue Moses said to the people: Do not be afraid! Stand firm and you will see what God will do to save you today.

Mt 4:1-11
12 Wed Jesus said to the tempter: Away with you! For Scripture says, "Worship the Lord your God, and serve him alone."

Ps 9
13 Thu The Lord is a refuge for the oppressed, a stronghold in time of trouble. Those who know your name trust in you, Lord. For you never forsake those who seek you.

Is 58:6-8
14 Fri If you break unjust chains to let the oppressed go free, if you share your food with the hungry and shelter the homeless, then your light will break forth like the dawn, your wound will be quickly healed and the glory of the Lord will come behind you.

Mt 9:36-10:8
15 Sat Jesus sent out the twelve, saying: Proclaim that the kingdom of heaven is close at hand. Freely you have received, freely give.

Mk 13:24-32
16 SUN Jesus said: Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

1 Co 1:26-31
17 Mon God chose things that by human standards are weak to confound the strong. God chose what is lowly and despised in the eyes of the world.

Ps 118
18 Tue In my distress, I called to the Lord. God heard me and set me free.

Is 55:6-11
19 Wed Seek the Lord while he is near. Turn to our God, who pardons freely.

1 Jn 1:1-7
20 Thu God is light, in him there is no darkness at all. If we walk in the light, we are in communion with one another.

Dn 9:18-19
21 Fri Daniel prayed saying: Listen to the prayer of your servant. For we rely not on our good deeds but on your great mercy.

Mt 5:44-48
22 Sat Jesus said: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be children of your Father in heaven. You must set no bounds to your love, just as your heavenly Father sets none to his.

Jn 18:33-37
23 SUN Jesus said to Pilate: For this I was born, and for this I came into the world: to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice.

Ezk 11:17-20
24 Mon The Lord says: I will give an undivided heart to my people. I will put a new spirit in them.

Ps 62
25 Tue Rest in God alone, my soul! He is the source of my hope.

Ac 2:42-47
26 Wed All the believers held everything in common. They sold their goods and possessions and shared the proceeds according to the needs of each person.

Rm 8:28-30
27 Thu In all things God works for the good of those who love him and who have been called according to his purpose.

Jn 10:11-15
28 Fri Jesus said: I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down his life for his sheep.

Lk 17:20-21
29 Sat Jesus said: The coming of the kingdom of God cannot be observed, for the kingdom of God is among you.

Lk 21:25-36
30 SUN ADVENT
Jesus said: Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away. Be on the watch and pray at all times.

JOHANNINE HOURS

ISAIAH 11,1-9

Johannine hours are meant as a way of seeking God in silence and prayer in the midst of our daily life. During the course of a day, take an hour or so to read the Bible passage with the short commentary and to reflect on the questions which follow. Afterwards, a group of 3 to 10 people can meet to share what they have discovered and perhaps for a time of prayer.

At a time when the kings of Israel were disappointing the expectations placed in them, the prophet Isaiah found hope for a new beginning in his faith in God. He saw that God would place on the throne a son of David who would reign according to the desires of God's heart. This king would not find in himself the wisdom and strength necessary to rule; he would receive them directly from God. His action would be based on "fear of the Lord," which means here the recognition that God is the source of his activity, that everything is a gift.

Animated by the breath of the Lord, the new king would be able to "judge," in other words to bring justice to society, above all by taking care of the least fortunate. He would accomplish this task by the power of his word alone: in v. 4b, images of violence are applied to the act of speaking, of pronouncing judgements. As a result, the whole of creation will be pacified, reconciled; even snakes will lose their power to harm. The passage thus concludes on an "ecological" note, a vision of the created universe brought back to the peace of paradise, just as when it left the hands of God.

Since in the Bible the king is a figure of the human being par excellence, here the ideal king seems to restore and bring to fulfillment the vocation of Adam (Gen 2-3). Instead of stealing the fruit of knowledge, he receives it as a gift. And so this knowledge spreads out and becomes a source of reconciliation, enabling the whole of creation to recover its original harmony, desired by God from all eternity.

- Who are the "needy"and the "poor" in my situation (v. 4)? What can I do to support them?
- What enables us to become a source of peace for those around us?
- What are the signs of the presence of God's Spirit in our life?

MEDITATING ON THE WORD

DECEMBER

These short readings are those read, day by day, at community prayer in Taizé. The Bible reference given indicates a slightly longer passage.

Ps 94:14-22

1 Mon When I say, "I am slipping," your faithful love, Lord, supports me.

Jr 1:4-8

2 Tue The Lord said to Jeremiah: Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you and consecrated you.

1 Th 3:12-13

3 Wed May God make your love increase so that it overflows for each other and for everyone. May he confirm your hearts.

Jr 3:12

4 Thu The Lord says to his people: Return to me, for I am merciful.

Jn 20:24-29

5 Fri Jesus said to Thomas: You believe because you can see me. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe.

Jn 3:16-17

6 Sat God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that whoever believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

Lk 3:1-6

7 SUN John the Baptist came as is written in the book of Isaiah: A voice of one who cries in the desert, "Prepare a way for the Lord, make straight God's paths!"

Lk 1:26-38

8 Mon The angel said to Mary: Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favour with God. You will conceive in your womb and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus.

Ps 138

9 Tue Lord, you look upon the humble. Though I live surrounded by trouble, you give me life.

Ws 1:11-15

10 Wed God did not make death and takes no pleasure in the destruction of the living. God created all things for life.

Is 55:10-11

11 Thu The Lord says: As the rain and the snow come down from the sky and do not return before having watered the earth and made it fertile, so is it with the word that goes out from my mouth: it will not return to me before having achieved its purpose.

2 Co 8:7-15

12 Fri Be generous, for you know the generosity of our Lord Jesus Christ who became poor for your sake.

Mk 9:17-29

13 Sat Someone said to Jesus: I believe! Help my lack of faith.

Lk 3:10-18

14 SUN John the Baptist said to the people: Anyone who has two tunics must share with the one who has none. And anyone with something to eat must do the same.

Mt 9:9-13

15 Mon As he walked, Jesus saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax office, and he said to him, "Follow me." And he got up and followed him.

1 Th 5:12-22

16 Tue Be always joyful, pray continually and give thanks in all circumstances.

Is 50:10

17 Wed Who among you reveres the Lord? Who among you walks in darkness and sees no light? Trust in the name of the Lord and rely upon your God.

Ps 86

18 Thu Teach me your way, O Lord, and I will walk in your truth. Give me an undivided heart that I may revere you.

Mt 6:25-34

19 Fri Jesus said: Do not worry about your life. Seek first God's kingdom and saving justice.

1 P 3:8-12

20 Sat Do not repay one wrong with another. Seek peace and pursue it.

Lk 1:39-45

21 SUN Elizabeth said to Mary: Blessed is she who believed that the promise the Lord made her would be fulfilled.

Mt 19:16-22

22 Mon Jesus said to a rich young man: If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me.

Jm 1:22-25

23 Tue James writes: Do not only listen to the Word, put it into practice.

Ep 1:15-23

24 Wed May God enlighten the eyes of your heart so that you may see the hope to which he calls you.

Jn 1:1-18

25 Thu CHRISTMAS
The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

Mt 25:31-40

26 Fri St STEPHEN
Jesus said: In truth I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.

1 Jn 1:1-4

27 Sat St JOHN
Life itself became visible, we saw it and testify to it. We proclaim to you the eternal life which was with the Father and was revealed to us.

Col 3:12-17

28 SUN Bear with one another and forgive whatever grievances you have against one another. The Lord has forgiven you, do the same in your turn.

Lk 6:36-38

29 Mon Jesus said: Give, and it will be given to you. A full measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For the measure you use will be the measure used for you.

1 Jn 3:16-24

30 Tue We can reassure our hearts before God, whenever our hearts condemn us; for God is greater than our hearts and knows all things.

Jn 13:31-35

31 Wed Jesus said: Love one another just as I have loved you. By this, everyone will recognize you as my disciples.

JOHANNINE HOURS

PHILIPPIANS 2,1-11

Johannine hours are meant as a way of seeking God in silence and prayer in the midst of our daily life. During the course of a day, take an hour or so to read the Bible passage with the short commentary and to reflect on the questions which follow. Afterwards, a group of 3 to 10 people can meet to share what they have discovered and perhaps for a time of prayer.

By means of an ancient Christian hymn, Saint Paul shows how a life of faith is rooted in the behaviour of Christ himself. The hymn starts from the question "What does it mean to be of divine status?" And the astonishing answer shows how different the living God is from our human ideas concerning the deity. Being God does not mean at all trying to hold on to the first place, but rather lowering oneself as far as possible out of love. The incarnation and the atrocious death of Christ are thus explained as the "logical" consequence—a divine logic, unsettling for us—of his identity as the Son of God.

And to show us that this is in fact God's logic and not a mere failure or misunderstanding, God raises up Christ to the highest place in the universe and proclaims his true identity: he is the *Kyrios*, the Lord, the one who reigns in God's name. The resurrection and the ascension reveal the meaning of Christ's life and death and show their consequences for the whole of creation. Every creature can henceforth enter into the current of this divine logic which has now become manifest at the heart of the world.

From now on, there can be no room in the community of Christ's disciples for personal ambition, for running after prestige or honours. On the contrary, the rule of life for believers is mutual submission (cf. Eph 5,21). When they act this way in the image of Christ, the faithful see the bonds of communion between them become more and more intimate and intense.

- What keeps the Christian community from being one in outlook and purpose? How can we be creators of communion in it?
- What does this hymn tell us about the basis and the true meaning of Christian humility?

Poland

The Floods in Wroclaw

Throughout the summer, the Polish young people, very numerous in Taizé as in past years, showed their deep concern for the victims of the unprecedented flooding in their country. Each day news was given about the situation in Poland. Those who arrived told of what they had seen and those who left Taizé did not always know what they would find on their return home.

Among the towns most affected by the flooding was Wroclaw. Entire districts of the city were under water: Kozanow, Maslice, as well as towns and villages in the region: Siechnice, Radwanice, Swieta Katarzyna... These names, so difficult for non-Poles to pronounce, reminded many people from throughout Europe of the hospitality they had received during the two European meetings in Wroclaw.

During the flooding, a Taizé brother went to visit the people there. A prayer service was held in a parish. Following the advice of Caritas, a contact was established with some villages. And young people from Wroclaw helped thirty youth from the affected villages to prepare their stay in Taizé.

Adam lives in Olesnica, near several of the flooded villages. He wrote: "In these tragic days, there was something beautiful: brotherhood and efficient aid. In the apartment buildings, neighbours on the upper storeys welcomed in their homes those from the lower storeys who had lost everything. We were able to share the smallest apartments, living like one family, even if normally so many things separate us. I could see from my window in the evening the dirty water, so destructive, stretching out in all directions, and in the upper windows the flames of candles and lanterns gleaming, with the radiance of family warmth.

"These floods will leave a mark on our life for a long time to come. You can still see the effects: the makeshift dykes, the piles of rubbish where everything that was destroyed is piled up. But we are also looking to the future. There is the beautiful perspective of the meeting in Vienna. We will begin the weekly prayers again, and we are looking forward to being welcomed soon by the Austrians, and the common prayers that will help us to discover something new about God and about ourselves."

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Taizé Brothers in North America

In the coming months, as in past years, two brothers of Taizé will be travelling in North America for prayers, visits and meetings.
In October - November 1997 they will be mainly on the East Coast, in February 1998 on the West Coast.

This fall, several events are planned in the greater New York City area.
For information contact: Judith Bruder (516-621-2572; judithb@idt.net).

Two events will take place in Connecticut, an evening of prayer and sharing Nov 6 sponsored by the Spiritual Life Center in Bloomfield (860-243-2374) and a weekend retreat Nov 7-9 at Wisdom House in Litchfield (860-567-3163)

The brothers will be in the Boston area the week of Nov 10 to visit various university campuses. Contact Rev. Joanne Engquist (617-876-3256; thajir@juno.com) for information.

Upcoming events:

Denver CO, Feb 6-8
(Charlotte Million, 303-871-2777; cmillion@du.edu)

San Francisco CA, Feb 20-22
(Mercy Center, 415-340-7474)

Seattle WA, Feb 27 - Mar 1
(St James Cathedral, 206-382-4874).

The Death of Mother Teresa of Calcutta

Mother Teresa has now entered the life that never ends. With the brothers of our community, in particular those who live in Asia, with a great many young people from every continent, we share the pain of the sisters and all those who were close to her.

Mother Teresa knew that we are in a world where light and darkness co-exist and, by her life, she invited us to choose the light.

I met her in the most diverse situations, among others in going to live, with some of my brothers, among the poor in India.

During one of the times she spent in Taizé, in 1983, we launched a common appeal that remains true today: "In Calcutta, there are homes for the dying which are visible, but in Western civilization many young people live in homes for the dying which are invisible. They are marked by broken relationships or by worry about their future. The result is scepticism and discouragement: What is the use of existing. Does life still have any meaning?"

Among the times I shared with Mother Teresa, one of my strong memories dates from 1984 in Ro when we were called to anim together the celebration that ope the first World Youth Day.

Prayer was for her the source of a l that sets the heart on fire. She w aware that a communion in God ta us out of ourselves and leads to a tra figuration of our being. And then t question arises: how can we alleviate forms of human suffering on ear whether moral or physical?

Brother Roger of Ta

Brother Roger travelled to Calcutta for the funeral of Mother Teresa. Before leaving, he wrote this testimonial.
Mother Teresa and Brother Roger wrote three books together, including *Seeking the Heart of God: Reflections on Prayer* (HarperCollins/Harper San Francisco).

Lithuania

Creating a Living Community

One of the parishes of Kaunas bears the name of "the parish of the Ressurrection." About 100,000 people live in this neighbourhood, and the small wooden church is not large enough. There is also a huge wooden church on the hill; it can be seen from everywhere in the city. All of the inhabitants know it. But at present it is being restored, because for years it was used as a factory to make radios and televisions.

The parish priest suggested to the young people to go and pray in that large church, even though it is still unfinished. The first public prayer was held there in May, after the service in the small church. The young people led the parishioners to that former place of prayer. And this prayer was a symbol for the elderly of the hope regained that the building would become God's house once again. The younger people also sensed the importance of the moment. The radiant faces, the prayers recited together, the liturgical songs overflowing from the hearts of believers, all bore witness to this.

Much time and work will be necessary for the old church to become what it was in the dreams of many people. The main thing is for the spirit of prayer and communion to return to this place. From now on people will gather there each Saturday for a time of prayer until the church is re-consecrated.

Community prayer in the old church of the Resurrection was thus an initiative of the young people of the parish. At present, there is quite an active community life among them. The parish has a bulletin published by the young; there are several youth choirs that sing during the celebrations. Saturday evenings, the young people meet at the "green house," the true centre of parish life. Meetings and choir rehearsals are held there, and guests of the parish receive hospitality there.

The young members of the parish of the Resurrection are also active in sports. Playing basketball offers an opportunity to meet people from other parishes, then to pray together, to visit the handicapped, the elderly, orphans, and others. The fact that the assistant pastor plays with them was also very important for breaking down barriers. It was the beginning of a warm relationship and activities in common.

Each year, the "green house" is the place where people prepare for the European meeting. The small groups which met to prepare to go to Taizé were the first youth activities in the parish. The weeks spent in Taizé created many new initiatives in the life of the parish. Still more important, the pilgrimages to Taizé fostered the need to live in community, to share and to pray together. The youth of the parish of the Resurrection are now trying to create a living community that, when the old church is finishe their hearts can radiate the light of Go and they can share with others the lo of the Lord.

Letter from Taizé

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